Newsbrief

Outgoing President’s Message

Diane Gerlach, DO, Kenosha County Board of Health, WI

#inthistogether

Health departments across the country have been working day and night, doing everything they can to protect communities against COVID 19. They are dedicated warriors with a long road ahead. As Board of Health members and community members, we are in this with them.

Information is changing rapidly and is coming from all directions. It is difficult to differentiate fact from fiction, reality from hype, which fuels frustration and fear.

We can and need to help. We are respected leaders in our communities, and we need to use our influence to communicate with and educate anyone and everyone. We have a voice and need to make it heard.

Be a voice of reason. Stay up to date on the facts and educate those around you, coworkers, clients, patients, family. Help them interpret and understand the flood of information. Respectfully correct hype and rumor leading them to trustworthy sites. Explain the why of wearing masks and avoiding gatherings.

Be a voice of guidance. Your community and organization need direction to make appropriate decisions. Lead by example. People follow those they trust. Parents are desperate for advice on sending kids back to school. What does that mean for the whole family?

Be a voice of calm. People do not think clearly when driven by emotion. They do better when they know what to do. In the healthcare setting, they see us going to great lengths to protect patients but still carrying on with business. We can get through anything if we work together.

Be a voice of hope. We are understanding the disease more every day. Hospitals are finding better ways to treat COVID positive patients and get them to discharge. We have survived pandemics and disasters before, and we will again.

How do we help support our Health Officers and Health Departments? – Be a voice for them!

Diane Gerlach, DO

Thank you to the Network for Public Health Law for Sponsoring this Issue of the Newsbrief!

NALBOH Educational Offerings – See you in Michigan in 2021!

NALBOH has worked with our partners in Grand Rapids, MI at the Amway Grand Plaza to confirm dates for the 2021 Conference.

Plan to join us Sunday, August 1 - Tuesday, August 3, 2021!

Rooms are available at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel at a special group rate of $179 (plus tax).

Reservations can be made by calling the Hotel directly at 1-800-253-3590 and requesting the NALBOH Group block.

The deadline to receive this special rate is July 1, 2021.
Did you miss a Town Hall Discussion or an Annual Conference Webinar? Don’t worry! Listen to the Recordings Online!

A series of virtual Town Hall discussions are being offered to board of health members and staff to provide an opportunity to have an open discussion around boards of health while we work though the COVID-19 Pandemic. Town Hall discussions are open to members and non-members to join, ask questions, provide feedback and learn from others how they are handling various aspects of the pandemic.

Available Recordings:

- Publicly Supporting Your Health Department | August 6, 2020
- Health Equity | June 18, 2020
- Legal & Ethical Issues | May 28, 2020
- Continuity of Board Operations | May 7, 2020

Next Town Hall Discussion:

COVID-19 Tool: Sara Alert™ | October 1, 2020 | REGISTER NOW!

Click here for additional information, resources, and to listen to the recordings!

Missing the great content that the Annual Conference has been known to offer? Join us each month July-November for a series of webinars selected from the slate of breakout presentations accepted for the 2020 Annual Conference. Although we are disappointed that we are not able to meet in person this year, we hope you will make plans to join us virtually!

Available Recordings:

- Performance Management and the Oversight Role of Boards of Health | July 16, 2020
- Succession Planning in Public Health | August 13, 2020

Upcoming Annual Conference Webinars:

- Building Healthier Communities: The Federal Policy Landscape | September 10, 2020
- NACCHO National Profile of Local Health Departments – 2019 Profile Study Results | October 8, 2020
- The New Essential Public Health Services Framework: Implications for Boards of Health | November 12, 2020

Click here to for additional information and to Register!
NALBOH Presents New Board Members at Annual Meeting

The current NALBOH board welcomes four newly-elected board members. At the Annual Business Meeting, held virtually on August 19, new board members were presented to the membership to participate on the NALBOH Board of Directors. Beginning immediately, the following individuals begin their term of service to NALBOH in the following capacities:

John Novak (NV) - President-Elect
Benjamin Tillett (NC) - Treasurer
Connette McMahon (NC) - At Large Representative
Catherine Ushka (WA) - At Large Representative

Congratulations to the new board, and thank you to all candidates.

Finally, thank you to this year's outgoing board members - Debbie Peet and Sharon Stanley. Their thoughtful and hard work has kept the organization strong.

NALBOH Resource - Template Resource to Support your Health Department

Stemming from the recent NALBOH Townhall call earlier this month about supporting your health department, the NALBOH Board has created a template press release/letter of support that can be utilized by boards of health to support their health departments during the COVID-19 response. The templates shines the light on our local health departments and their commitment to limiting the spread, along with recognizing the great work outside of the response.

Please click here for the template to edit and use as you please.

2019 National Profile of Local Health Departments

NALBOH is pleased to share NACCHO’s release of its 2019 National Profile of Local Health Departments—the most comprehensive data on the work of public health departments at the county and city level. Findings show that LHDs experienced a loss of 21% of their workforce capacity over the past decade, hindering a timely and robust local public health response to COVID-19. In addition, budget shortages have affected LHD emergency preparedness and response programs. In 2019, more than 80% of LHDs experienced either a decreased or stagnant preparedness budget compared to the previous fiscal year.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of LHDs, including the functions and characteristics of their local boards of health (LBOHs). For example, Profile data show that 70% of LHDs have a LBOH; these entities are more likely to have a governing role than an advisory role. In addition, more than half of these LBOHs provide oversight, policy development, and legal authority functions. Check out www.naccho.org/profile to view the full report.

Join us on October 8th in our Annual Conference webinar series to hear more specifics related to boards of health and health departments in the country!

NALBOH State Leadership Committee - Get Involved and Represent your State!

SALBOH (State Association of Local Boards of Health)’s have long-time been a core component of NALBOH and it’s membership. A committee of SALBOH’s formed many years ago to continue to provide a forum for dialogue among state associations, identify and recommend resources for state associations, and help develop new state associations. NALBOH recognizes that not all states have an organized SALBOH, and would like to continue to invite further representation from other states, and are now the “State Leadership Committee”. Please consider joining us as a representative to further board of health activity in your state and at the national level! All states are welcome! We meet on a bi-monthly basis by teleconference - Contact the NALBOH office if you are interested in attending or to see if your state is represented!

Our next meeting will be held on October 26th @ 12 p.m. Central. Let us know if you are interested and join us!
The 10 Essential Public Health Services Toolkit Released

From spring 2019 to September 2020, the Public Health National Center for Innovations (PHNCI) partnered with the de Beaumont Foundation to review and revise the 10 Essential Public Health Services (EPHS). The Futures Initiative brought the Essential Services national framework in line with current and future public health practice. This effort engaged the public health community in activities to collect information and build consensus for an updated 10 EPHS framework that reflects current and emerging public health practice needs. As part of the Futures Initiative: the 10 Essential Public Health Services, on September 9, 2020, the de Beaumont Foundation, Public Health National Center for Innovations, and a Task Force of public health experts revealed a revised version of the 10 Essential Public Health Services. The framework now centers equity, and incorporates current and future public health practice.

The 10 EPHS framework was developed in 1994 by a federal working group. It serves as the description of the activities that public health systems should undertake in all communities. Health departments and community partners around the nation organize their work around the Essential Public Health Services framework, schools and programs of public health teach it, and the framework informs descriptions and definitions of practice.

The framework has provided a roadmap of goals for carrying out the mission of public health in communities around the nation. However, the public health landscape has shifted dramatically since 1993, and in 2019 many public health leaders agreed it was time to revisit whether and how the framework could better reflect current and future practice and how it can be used to create communities where people can achieve their best possible health.

Click here for more information on the framework and additional tools to share.
The COVID-19 pandemic is challenging public health in unprecedented ways, and is exposing structural failures and health inequities that further exasperate the impact of the virus. State and local jurisdictions have had to navigate a myriad of public health legal and emergency preparedness response issues in an effort to mitigate infection rates and loss of life. This virtual two-day Summit will examine key issues surfaced by the pandemic and paths forward to more effective and equitable response and recovery efforts.

20 concurrent sessions over two days covering critical issues, including:

- Health Equity for Marginalized Communities
- Drug and Vaccine Development and Access
- Federal, State and Local Emergency Measures
- State Preemption
- Mental Health
- Protecting and Managing the Health Workforce
- Food Insecurity
- Housing
- Voter Safety and Participation
- Education and Broadband Access
- Telehealth
- Harm Reduction and Substance Use Disorder
- Executive Decision-making

Register for free by scanning the QR code below or by visiting networkforphl.org/summit

Public Health Law and Policy Q&A Sessions

Attend one of five Q&A sessions with the Network’s law and policy experts to ask questions and receive real-time legal technical assistance on a broad array of issues.

Empower Public Health

To ensure the Public Health Law Virtual Summit is accessible to those with scarce resources, we have decided to waive the registration fee to attend. If you wish, and are able, we would greatly appreciate a tax-deductible contribution at any of these suggested levels, or one of your choosing, to help us offset the costs of producing this event. Visit networkforphl.org/summit for more information.

CLE credits are available.
NALBOH Joins Coalition to Invest in Public Health Workforce

NALBOH joined with many other public health organizations in support of Keeping Communities Healthy by Investing in the Public Health Workforce. View the full document and supporting organizations here.

The public health workforce is the backbone of our nation’s governmental public health system at the county, city, and state levels. Skilled professionals are the primary resource necessary to deliver public health programs and services: they lead efforts to ensure the safety of the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink. They prepare and respond to disasters like hurricanes, floods, and wildfires. And they are on the front lines of addressing complex and emerging issues, like the opioid crisis, the spread of novel coronavirus, and the re-emergence of vaccine preventable diseases like measles. However, governmental public health was hit hard by the Great Recession, and whereas much of the rest of the public sector workforce has recovered or grown, local and state health departments have not. In fact, local and state health departments have lost nearly a quarter (23%) of their workforce since 2008, shedding over 50,000 jobs across the country.

Network for Public Health Law - Health Equity in a Pandemic Summit

Widespread inequities create the conditions that stymie our ability to fully mitigate the devastating health and economic impacts of COVID-19. In a special opening plenary, health equity leaders will examine the intertwined forces intensifying the damage from the pandemic, and share their visions for a path forward to recovery. Learn more and register for the Summit.

Evaluating Equity in Public Health Laws and Policies – A Critical Tool at a Critical Time

Conducting a regular assessment of laws and policies is a strategy for addressing health equity, especially when that assessment includes and is informed by community perspectives. The Equity Assessment Framework for Public Health Laws and Policies is a tool designed to assist policymakers and practitioners in assessing new and existing laws and policies through an equity perspective. This framework can be applied to statutes, regulations, ordinances, resolutions, declarations, organizational policies, and policy guidance that either directly impact public health or impact the operations of agencies or organizations responsible for health outcomes.

Click here for details.
NALBOH Calls on Leaders to Acknowledge Racism as a Public Health Crisis

The recent killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, and subsequent protests continue to highlight the racism and inequities in this country. For board of health members and health department staff of color, these events highlight the marginalization and increase fear and frustration they live with each day based solely on the color of their skin. In the NALBOH community, we promise to continue doing all we can to challenge and change systems of inequity that perpetuate racism and bias within our communities. We hope that board of health members can advocate for change as elected officials, community supporters and public health advocates. The National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH) calls on leaders for reform as the devastating effect of systematic racism and oppression targeting people of color in our communities continues.

Board of health members are an essential link between public health services and a healthy community. Uniquely positioned to deliver technical expertise in governance and leadership, board development, health priorities, and public health policy, NALBOH denounces racism in all forms. We have a responsibility to acknowledge racism, advocate for equitable policies and inform the public discourse. We see the horrific effects of racism in our communities every day.

NALBOH calls upon local, state and national leaders to acknowledge that racism is an ongoing problem in the United States; commit to calling for an end to racist language, practices and policies; listen to people who have experienced racism; and value and affirm the human rights of all people.

NALBOH asks our members to commit locally to improving the quality of life and health of your residents; advocate for relevant policies that improve health in the Black community; and support local, state, and federal initiatives that advance social justice; and assess current and proposed local laws, ordinances, health regulations, and policies, as well as their implementation, to promote health for all within your communities.

Racism is a public health issue and local health departments and boards should play a lead role in efforts to address it. Violence or the threat of violence—driven by on-going, systematic racism—creates a toxic stress that impacts the health of children, families, and communities.

Across the country, local and state leaders are declaring racism a public health crisis or emergency. These declarations are an important first step in the movement to advance racial equity and justice and must be followed by allocation of resources and strategic action. Please find the full statement here.

Click here to find the growing list of states, cities and counties that are naming racism as a determinant of health, from the American Public Health Association.